

# INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2014 | INDIA



Greetings Alumni!

First, we apologize for the delay in sending out December's Alumni Newsletter. Our Embassy in New Delhi was completely occupied this January by the visit of President Barack Obama to India, and we are still catching up! President Obama's visit represented another step forward in the strong Indo-American relationship, and truly embodied our new motto "Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go". We were thrilled that many of our alumni were invited to hear his moving speech at Siri Fort in Delhi. We are very excited for our new year of alumni outreach and programming. While looking to 2015, we will begin sending out our newsletters on a bi-monthly basis, so the January/February version is coming soon. We are very excited about the positive feedback on the newsletter, and especially to learn about all the great accomplishments of our alumni. — *Katherine Caro Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, New Delhi*

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## REWIND: NEWS AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY AND CONSULATES

### U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, CHENNAI

#### CAO's Meetings with NES-UGRAD & ACCESS Alumni in Kochi

Amidst a tight schedule CAO Andie De Arment found time to meet with two recent NES-UGRAD alumnae, Ms. Sherin Sabu and Ms. Smrithi Mohan, at St. Thomas College, Thevara, and awarded their participation certificates received from Washington.



On December 13, CAO Andie De Arment met with some English Access alumni in Aluva, Kochi. She interacted with them and learned that most of them are now pursuing their higher education in top colleges.



### Cross-Border Games

Do you always have to talk to communicate? Our alumni from Chennai and Islamabad don't think so! They met online on December 15 to mark the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence." Improv theater - going on all-fours to make a table, driving an imaginary bus, and showing time using flash cards – replaced words as they shared mutual concerns, offered solutions and sought common ground on gender issues. Alumni described small actions to improve gender parity in the region, emphasized the need for strong support systems to counter street harassment, and also discussed the role of media and popular culture in promoting gender stereotypes in the region, enacting a scene from a recent popular Bollywood movie.



### Alumni Lead Health and Skill Workshops

On December 12, PAO Ariel Pollock inaugurated two alumni-led workshops at Hyder Garden Matriculation School, which serves the most underdeveloped areas of North Chennai. While one was a skills development workshop organized by the principal and IVLP alumna Begum Thasleem, the other was a health presentation on 'cancer awareness' targeting parents (women above 30 years) by Ms. Sridevi Kannan (a Legislative Fellow).



### Mending an “Uneasy” Relationship

The U.S. Consulate General, Chennai, supported the participation of Mr. Timothy Lyden, Trademarks Attorney and partner, Hogan Lovells, USA, in the “International Conference on Emerging Trends in Intellectual Property Regime (IPR),” organized by the High Court of Madras and the Tamil State Judicial Academy in Chennai, on December 19-21. Three exchange alumni, Justice M. Jaichandren, Judge at the High Court of Madras, Mr. N.L. Rajah, and Ms. Anita Sumanth, were the core committee members of the team that helped organize this conference under the direct supervision of the Honorable Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

The conference was attended by over 200 Supreme Court, High Court and District Level Judges, lawyers, and IPR experts from all over India. Besides Timothy Lyden from the USA, experts from Germany and the United Kingdom offered a global overview on IP issues.

Chief Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul told the audience about his visit to the United States a few years ago organized by the U.S. Department of Justice which gave him an opportunity to visit various American courts, including those handling IPR cases.



*The Honorable Chief Justice Kaul, Justice Jaichandren and U.S. Speaker, Timothy Lyden.*

## U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, HYDERABAD

### Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Meets Hyderabad-based Think-Tankers



Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Walter Douglas, met with two Hyderabad IVLP alumni, who are affiliated to well-known local think tanks and research institutions, on December 8. Subodh Kandamuthan is the Director of the Centre for Health Care Management at the Administrative Staff College of India, and Shital Jhunjhunwala is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Centre for Corporate Governance at the Institute of Public Enterprise. The alumni shared their experiences as participants in the IVLP on American Think Tanks that took place during October 2014. They discussed the need for a more significant exchange of ideas and knowledge-sharing between Indian and American think tanks.



### **Alumna-Activist and Renowned Filmmaker Promote Awareness of Combatting TIP and GBV**

In commemoration of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence,” IVLP alumna Vijaya Bhavani Bhamidipalli organized a screening of “Lakshmi,” the latest film by Nagesh Kukunoor that focuses on combatting trafficking and gender-based (GBV) violence issues. After the film screening, filmmaker Nagesh Kukunoor, co-producer Elahe Hiptoola, and Bhavani discussed real-life stories of forced sex trafficking and GBV that inspired the film. Lakshmi was screened on December 2 as a part of a campaign led by U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad to inform, educate, and mobilize local audiences against gender-based violence and trafficking. Through this event, PAS Hyderabad fortified its ties with young students in Hyderabad as well as its alumni.



## **U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, KOLKATA**

### **PAO visits alumni-led organization ATSEC in Ranchi, Jharkhand**

PAO J.J. Joria and the alumni coordinator visited the alumni-run organization Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children (ATSEC), as part of an outreach program in the state of Jharkhand. ATSEC, headed by Sanjay Mishra, alumnus of the International Visitors Leadership Program 2008, is one of the prime nodal agencies dealing with trafficking and exploitation of women and children, a major concern especially in this part of the country. Mr. Mishra hosted a tour of the premises, which is essentially a housing and training space for the rescued girls. The girls are provided vocational training so as to prepare for an independent and self-reliant future. ATSEC does very commendable work in the entire state of Jharkhand, and it is always helpful to visit the alumni organizations for first-hand knowledge of its organization and functioning. Not only does it help to further strengthen our alumni relationship, it is also



*PAO Joanne Joria is welcomed with a traditional dance by the girls at ATSEC*

useful information to have as we develop programs and to collaborate on our upcoming anti TIP Conclave to be held in Ranchi in March 2015.

### **PAO meets Alumni in Ranchi**

PAO J.J. Joria and the alumni coordinator met with Jharkhand alumni during an outreach visit to the state. The meeting allowed us to connect for the first time. Among the alumni who attended were Vasavi Kiro (International Visitors Leadership Program 2011), Syed Saud Akhtar (International Visitors Leadership Program 2003), Shelly Kerketta (International Visitors Leadership Program 2012) and Sanjay Mishra (International Visitors Leadership Program 2008). They provided perspective on the current social, economic, and political scenario in Ranchi. It was a fruitful meeting as ideas for collaborations emerged, and it resulted in the alumni expressing a keen interest in meeting on a regular basis and staying connected.

## **U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL, MUMBAI**

### **Theatre Workshop explores issues on Gender-Based Violence**

Twenty-eight participants including alumni, students, and theater enthusiasts attended a workshop “ACTing Against Gender Based Violence” led by an USG alumna and the pandies' theatre group at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) on December 3, 2014. The interactive workshops included everyday conflicts between couples, rape and sexual abuse, and the representation of violence against women. The workshop was part of the See Something? Say Something! Project facilitated by Dr. Anjali Monteiro, a Fulbright alumna, and the pandies' group. The workshop sought to combat violence against women by enhancing awareness of existing gender stereotypes against males and females.

### **Alumni take GBV campaign to the streets**

The U.S. Consulate General Mumbai in association with pandies theatre group, local NGO SNEHA, and USG alumni addressed GBV issues in the community at Dharavi (Asia's largest slum area) using vernacular theater. The performance on December 3 was followed by a heated and intense discussion on rape issues. As a run up to the international "16 days of activism against GBV" the Consulate used the opportunity of the Mission alumni project to amplify messaging about the USG's commitment to fighting gender based violence and target public attitudes towards women's entitlement to violence-free lives.



### **Alumni couple awarded at UNFCCC COP 20 summit**

IVLP alumnus Mr. Biplab Paul and IVLP and Fulbright alumna Ms. Trupti Jain were awarded at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Convention of Parties (COP) 20 summit in Lima, Peru on December 9, 2014.



### **Dramatized Reading of play "Seven"**

At the second of the four-city tour of 4S "See Something, Say Something", the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai in association with pandies' theater, New Delhi, and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) organized a performance of SEVEN, a documentary play, based on personal interviews with seven courageous women from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Guatemala, Nigeria, Northern Ireland and Pakistan, who overcame blocks, threats and resistance on their path to achieve justice and freedom. All the performers for SEVEN in Mumbai are alumni of various U.S. Government sponsored exchange programs, including Ms. Ritka Sahni, Ms. Novela Corda, Ms. Paromita Chakrabarti, Ms. Trupti Chengalath Sreedharan, Ms. Aarefa Johari, Ms. Manshi Gala, and Mr. Chintan Modi. The aim of the project is to throw the spotlight on existing issues of violence; affirm activist attempts to eliminate violence esp. gender-based violence (GBV) in various parts of the world; and disseminate a "glocal" feminist approach.

### **Alumnus wins Sanctuary Asia award**

IVLP alumnus Mr. Isaac Kehimkar received the Green Teacher Award at the Sanctuary Asia Wildlife Awards on December 5, 2014. Read more here: <http://goo.gl/3WSffq>

### **Alumnus' organization organizes Human Rights Day Rally**

IVLP alumnus Mr. Harish Sadani's organization MAVA (Men Against Violence and Abuse) organized a Human Rights Day Rally, where students from over 15 colleges in Mumbai participated. The rally espoused women's rights, put up street-play shows at four locations on important rally routes, and sent strong messages of how girls should say 'NO' to anything about which they feel uncomfortable and how boys should accept that 'NO'. The title of play was apt -- Chuppi Todo, Jor se Bolo.



### **Launch of Mobile Apps 4 Climate Change – AEIF 2014 project**

The Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2014 competition winner, Dr. Shubhalaxmi, launched three mobile apps that will be used by youth in India to identify trees, butterflies, and birds that are indicator species on Climate Change. On December 8, 2014, over 300 students from 15 schools across Mumbai and Navi Mumbai attended the launch of Mobile Apps 4 Climate Change at the Don Bosco International School. The iNaturewatch apps include iBirds, iButterflies, and iTrees, and will allow users to easily identify local flora and fauna, get details about them, and report their presence online to scientists gathering data on climate change. The full set of Mobile Apps 4 Climate Change was launched in Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Delhi beginning December 8, and became available for free online beginning December 12. Dr. Shubhalaxmi, an alumnus of the Fulbright and Humphrey programs, conceptualized the apps, for which she garnered funding from the U.S. Department of State Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF). Through partnerships with schools across India, Dr. Shubhalaxmi is empowering youth to act as citizen scientists who will use these mobile apps to enhance their own knowledge while generating additional data for the scientific community. The apps may be downloaded through Google Play Store. For more information check out: <http://www.inaturewatch.org/>



### **U.S. Consulate General Mumbai organizes a GBV TechCamp**



There are a handful of GBV-focused groups leading the use of Internet platforms to create crowd-sourcing maps, blogs, and online campaigns to fight GBV. In order to expand digital literacy for NGOs working in the GBV sphere and make their work more effective, the U.S. Consulate General Mumbai held a “GBV TechCamp” that brought together technologists and women’s

activists in a workshop format. The TechCamp, on December 6-7, trained participants on the different ways they could use online

tools to promote women's safety, raise awareness, and change attitudes. A few alumni including Ms. Priti Patkar, Ms. Sandhya Panaskar, and Mr. Harish Sadani working in the GBV field were also part of this TechCamp.

### **Museum Connects alumnus Indian coordinator for eMammal project**

An Indo-US project aimed at involving people in understanding the environment using sophisticated technology has been launched at Amboli, a hill station in Sindhudurg district, bordering Kolhapur. The project, eMammal International, is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Bombay National History Society (BNHS) is implementing the project in India with the help of American



Alliance of Museums and North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, U.S. Museum Connects alumnus Mr. Rahul Khot, curator at BNHS is the India coordinator for this project. Article: <http://goo.gl/xFjErb>

### **Alumnus facilitates Library program for students**

The American Library engaged political science students from Ruparel College for a library orientation, facilitated by IVLP alumnus Mr. Avinash Kolhe. The program included a screening of the documentary "The March" and a library tour. The program was part of the American Library's campaign to attract new visitors to the library and to promote eLibraryUSA, helping to familiarize the activities and services offered by the American Library to the students.

### **CG Vajda meets Maharashtra Chief Minister and alumnus Mr. Fadnavis**

Representatives of 22 U.S. companies and U.S. Consul General Tom Vajda met with Maharashtra Chief Minister and Mr. Devendra Fadnavis, alumnus of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) program, in Nagpur on Tuesday, December 16. *The Indian Express* reported that Chief Minister Fadnavis appealed to the U.S. delegation to establish business ventures and industrial units in the state under the "Make in Maharashtra" program initiated by the CM himself. Citing one official, the *Indian Express* reported that the U.S. companies stressed the need for a single point of contact and early clearances as well as good infrastructure in order to set up successful businesses in the state.



## **U.S. Speaker lectures at alumni organizations**

During a December 11-12 visit to Mumbai, Dr. Joshua Apte, an ITRI-Rosenfeld Postdoctoral Fellow in the Environmental



Energy Technologies Division at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, engaged with people to discuss air quality engineering and assessment techniques. He discussed air pollution control measures with IVLP alumnus Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Chief Scientist and Head, and others of National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) on December 11.

## **IVLP alumna and abilities activist celebrates World Disability Day**



IVLP alumna Ms. Ritika Sahni, founder of Trinayani , organized a variety of events to celebrate World Disability Day in December. For the Trinayani team, this day was an opportunity to make disability related issues more mainstream, initiate conversations, organize events to reach public consciousness, and ultimately make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. The outfit's 30 seconds awareness film, '*Leave No One Behind*', was dubbed in seven different languages and aired

on Doordarshan and other TV channels as a public service announcement. For movie buffs, there was a film screening and interactive discussion on disability related issues at The Playce in Mulund on December 2. Oberoi Mall hosted an evening of "Pehli Baarish", Trinayani's Inclusive Music Band along with blind musicians from NODA – National Organization for Disabled Artists, India, on December 6, followed by an inclusive Flash Mob on December 7.

## **U.S. EMBASSY, NEW DELHI**

### **4S Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi**

To mark the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and the anniversary of the Nirbhaya rape, the U.S. Embassy held the "See Something? Say Something! ACTing against Gender Based Violence (4S)" theatre project in Delhi (December 17-19) and Jammu (December 27-28). Theater company pandies' (directed by IVLP alumnus Sanjay Kumar) partnered with SPYM and Yakjah, NGOs run by IVLP alumni Mr. Rajesh Kumar and Ms. Ashima Kaul, to put on the dramatic reading of

the play with alumni participants, as well as hold community theater outreach in underserved regions of Jammu and Delhi.



### **Pravah Workshops**

Get ready to participate in upcoming mentoring and leadership workshops organized through the U.S. Mission in India around the country! Leading youth NGO Pravah has designed four-day workshops to focus on leadership and develop a mentoring network between our professional and youth alumni groups. The pilot project was kicked off with a small team of Delhi-based alumni on December 10, with six alumni serving as mentors. We've worked to modify the workshops to reflect the best way to implement them when they take place throughout the spring.

**Stay tuned for more information about these workshops from your local Alumni Coordinator!**



## What is the Alumni Coordinator Role?

Mission India has five Alumni Coordinators, who serve as your portal and liaison to all things alumni! Their job is to help build the alumni community and connect you to opportunities here in India. We encourage you to reach out to your Alumni Coordinator soon! They love to hear from you and are standing by to help with any questions and ideas:

*Chennai: Ms. Brindha Jayakanth, JayakanthB@state.gov*

*Hyderabad: Ms. Neha Kanitkar, KanitkarN@state.gov*

*Kolkata: Ms. Angelina Nair, NairAP@state.gov*

*Mumbai: Ms. Behrooz Avari, AvariBK@state.gov*

*New Delhi: Ms. Shailey Tucker, TuckerS2@state.gov*



## Stay Connected!

Have you registered on the [International Exchange Alumni](#) web site yet?

Join INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI, the official web site for more than 1,000,000 global alumni of USG exchange programs.

- ❖ Network with other alumni from around the globe
- ❖ Share information about exchange programs and alumni activities
- ❖ Participate in Live Q&A discussions with experts
- ❖ Access resources such as grants, jobs, and research databases

Also find us on Facebook and Twitter.



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